

## What Teachers Should Know about Administering the Assessment

While AIMSweb benchmarks are designed to be administered by teachers directly to their students, the state statute requires someone "other than the regular classroom teacher ... (who is) ... trained by the state department of education" to test students for the purpose of the IRI data collection. Since the measure is being used by the entire state, a first for AIMSweb, the primary reason for this component of the statute, and for differing from common AIMSweb procedures, is to better enable the state to collect statewide data in a reliable, validated, and standardized manner as well as to protect teachers from any questions of impropriety.

Assessment probes available in the Training Workbook are intended to measure and show how the assessment is given and scored. There are two categories of measures, and thus two training manuals: Early Literacy Measures (LNF, PSF, NWF, etc.) and Reading-CBM. The administration guidelines are highly scripted and precise as to how directions are given and what is both acceptable and not acceptable for scoring student responses. This degree of specificity is what ensures test validity and comparability of scores whether for benchmarking purposes by the state or for progress monitoring purposes by the teacher. Due to the nature of these probes being "screening" assessments, one would not want to ever give students the "benefit of the doubt" in scoring as this could cause a child who is at-risk to be missed (and thus allow the student to "fall through the cracks"). It is of utmost importance that the administration guidelines be maintained for both benchmarking and progress monitoring. And, indeed, a student will be better prepared for taking the benchmarking probe if he or she is monitored using the same administration guidelines with progress monitoring.

The training workbooks provide samples that are from actual progress monitoring probes. The benchmark probes are designed in the exact same manner. It is helpful for teachers to preview these workbooks, administration guidelines, and scoring procedures as they consider preparing students for the benchmarking periods in order to help students be aware of the procedures. Again, this can be done through the proper use of progress monitoring assessments. However, it is extremely important to remember that these materials are not provided as practice, nor are the progress monitoring passages meant for practice. The reason for this is mentioned above. A CBM is designed to measure the relationship between a school's Comprehensive Reading Program, any scaffolding provided for that program, and any skill-based interventions provided for the instructional treatment of a student. Thus, students should not "practice" for the IRI or for AIMSweb in the traditional sense. Rather, the Comprehensive Reading Program, if it is scientifically based and research validated, would serve as the curriculum that provides, in a broader context, the practice needed for the CBMs of AIMSweb. For this reason, the state is not providing or endorsing any "practice" materials for AIMSweb as the IRI. Ultimately, if children are not responding to the Comprehensive Reading Program in such a way as to meet the benchmark standards for AIMSweb, then the Comprehensive Reading Program's design, fidelity of implementation, the intensity and explicitness of instruction, and other school and systemic factors may need to be evaluated (cp. the Three Tier Model design for schools).

Training Workbooks May Be Viewed at:

<http://www.sde.idaho.gov/readingindicator/>  
See Under: Teachers—AIMSWeb Training Workbooks

## IRI Subtests Grades K-3

Kindergarten		Grade 1		Grade 2		Grade 3		
Fail	Win.	Spr.	Fail	Win.	Spr.	Fail	Win.	Spr.
LNF	LNF	LNF	*					
LSF	LSF							
PSF	PSF	PSF	PSF	NWF	NWF	R- CBM	R- CBM	R- CBM

\*LSF is omitted in Grade 1 because the same skill can be determined with NWF. For NWF, students can say the isolated sounds of the letters or they can read the whole word. Provided by AIMSweb 2007-2008



## Idaho Reading Indicator

### Teacher Information Guide

### Idaho Statute and the Purpose of the IRI:

Idaho statute 33-1614 requires K-3 students in Idaho to be assessed as they develop critical reading skills. The purpose of the assessment, the Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI), is to indicate which children are most likely going to be at-risk of failure with skills that are prerequisite for being successful readers throughout life. As is written in the statute, "the state K-3 assessment test results shall be reviewed by school personnel for the purpose of providing necessary interventions to sustain or improve the students' reading skills."

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## Understanding the Need for a New Idaho Reading Indicator

The state's decision to provide a new test for the IRI is grounded in the purpose of the Idaho statute. As a reading indicator, the state intends for school personnel to use the test to be able to successfully screen all K-3 students and catch those who would otherwise fall through the cracks. It is not intended to be a comprehensive outcome measure but is rather a general outcome measure (once identified as "at risk" a more specific assessments will be needed). AIMSweb provides benchmark and progress monitoring measures that screen students and measure progress with CBMs (Curriculum Based Measures). A CBM is designed to measure if the instructional treatment (i.e. the curriculum) that a student is receiving through a school's Comprehensive Reading Program (along with any extra scaffolding and intervention instruction) is succeeding at moving a student toward or maintaining an *at grade level* proficiency. Thus, since AIMSweb's benchmark CBMs measure the degree to which a student is at grade level or at-risk with critical reading skills, the state and school personnel will be better able to identify at-risk students in order to provide the necessary intervention through either minor or major changes to the student's instructional treatment (cp. the RTI model for at-risk students).



## Understanding the Assessment Tool

There are **four pertinent types of assessments** used for reading: **screening** (used to catch those at-risk), **diagnostic** (used to diagnose and find skill gaps), **progress monitoring** (used to evaluate growth toward a goal), and **outcome** (used to determine if a goal has been met). The AIMSWeb benchmarks being used for the IRI fit within **two of the four types of assessment: screening and outcome**. They are screening measures in the sense that they raise a red flag for students who may be at-risk, and thus

they help school personnel know who needs to be diagnosed for skill gaps. This is especially true in the fall and winter while much of the year remains to provide intervention. The benchmarks are an outcome measure in the sense that they also measure if the student is meeting grade-level goals during the given benchmarking period (as compared with peers).

The results for a student must be used to inform the intensity and explicitness of the instructional treatment that is given. This is why, while the state does not require AIMSweb's progress monitoring, the progress monitoring probes are part and parcel of the AIMSweb package. They are necessary for measuring the progress of at-risk students (**please note, the probes should never be used for practice**). They will provide useful information when a classroom teacher assesses his/her own students with these progress monitoring tools.

The following is a list of subtests that make up the AIMSweb IRI. See the table on the back of this brochure showing the sequence of assessments. These same subtests are available for use by teachers as progress monitoring tools. They will be new and unique each time a teacher monitors student progress.

### Test of Early Literacy: designed to measure prerequisite reading skills

- **LNF** (Letter Naming Fluency) – a measure of reading readiness
- **LSF** (Letter Sound Fluency) – a measure of basic skills with phonics
- **PSF** (Phoneme Segmentation Fluency) – a measure of phonemic awareness
- **NWF** (Nonsense Word Fluency) – a measure of basic phonics and decoding which can be used to differentiate students who decode phonetically from those who merely read by memorization of words

### Reading Curriculum-Based Measures

- **Reading:** designed to measure the application of skills in the context of true text
- **R-CBM** – scientifically researched measures of reading fluency that shows decoding accuracy and rate



Many thanks to Steve Underwood, Reading First School Improvement Coordinator, Center for School Improvement & Policy Studies at Boise State University, for his work developing the information in this document. He spent a great deal of time researching this information to ensure teachers are provided quality support for preparing children to be successful readers.

## The Importance of Progress Monitoring

This benefit of progress monitoring is of special importance when considering the difference between the previous IRI and the current AIMSweb measures. Whereas the previous IRI measured benchmarks according to standards that came in the curriculum at different times of the year, AIMSweb benchmarks are based on an end-of-year or mastery of skill standard. As school personnel evaluate student performance, it is important to note that all probes (AIMSweb skill assessments) in a given category (both benchmark and progress monitoring) are designed to the same level of difficulty (e.g. 1<sup>st</sup> grade R-CBM probes are all geared toward the difficulty level needed for the end of 1<sup>st</sup> grade). So, a student should theoretically perform very similarly on any given passage when given at the same time. What does change, on the other hand, is the expectation of performance. For example, the probes are all end-of-year challenge, but the "cut-score" level changes based on what is expected of the student in the particular benchmarking time period. A student is expected to perform the task of the probe with increasing speed and accuracy, according to national norms specifically for AIMSweb passages (for Idaho specific score expectations, please refer to the "IRI Student Record Card"<http://www.sde.state.id.us/ReadingIndicator/default.asp>). With the knowledge that the probes are of the same level of challenge, a teacher never needs to be uncertain of what to expect of a child during a benchmark period if proper progress monitoring has been occurring. Properly assessing a child with progress monitoring passages (suggestion: once per week for intensive students, twice per month with strategic students) will both give a clear idea of where the student will be at the benchmark as well as if the instructional treatment the child is receiving is succeeding at stepping stones of critical skills. These skills are built successively as children develop their ability to decode text (i.e. concepts in phonics and phonemic awareness) and read with proper accuracy and rate (i.e. reading fluency) closing any skill gaps.